

*Basil K. Gounaris\**

**Does Greece belong to the West?  
Reassessing Greek Anti-westernism in the Twentieth Century\*\***

In Greece, public and academic debates over historical questions, especially over history text-books, are no less heated than political discussions.<sup>1</sup> One could argue that in a state called ‘Hellas,’ built mostly on historical arguments and less on civil rights, it is quite natural for history to be valued exceedingly and citizens to become sentimental when they assess their past. Yet this does not explain the controversial character of such historical debates, nor the frequency and the publicity they have enjoyed during two full centuries of state independence. There is a good reason why it is so: The Greek trouble with the past is rooted in the still on-going debate whether Greece belongs to the East or to the West. Even if Greece was a separate case, a go-between East and West, a verdict is needed to decide whether in principle it is more Eastern or Western. Its ambivalent position in this bipolar scheme has affected the image of the Greek people, reflected in the past and in the future. Therefore –and most importantly– it has also affected the Greeks’ relation with Europe, to the extent that Europe is the original West and an indispensable ingredient of the western world. If the Greek past was ‘Hellenic’ in the European fashion and not Roman/

---

\* Professor of Modern History, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

\*\* This research is part of the project RePAST “Strengthening European integration through the analysis of conflict discourses: revisiting the past, anticipating the future,” which has received funding from the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme (grant agreement No. 769252). Parts of this paper, referring to the interwar period, have been presented extensively in Basil C. Gounaris–Marianna D. Christopoulos, “Reassessing the Greek National Schism of World War I: The Ideological Parameters,” *The Historical Review* 15 (2018): 235–268. For his valuable comments I am grateful to Prof. Ioannis D. Stefanidis and for his assistance with the post-war Press research to Mr Alexandros Drosinakis.

<sup>1</sup> Charis Athanasiadis, *Tα αποσυρθέντα βιβλία. Έθνος και σχολική ιστορία στην Ελλάδα 1858-2008* (The Withdrawn Books. Nation and School History in Greece 1858-2008) (Athens: Alexandreia, 2015).

Romeic (i.e., Greek-Orthodox) in the Byzantine fashion,<sup>2</sup> then it was natural for the new state to follow a modernizing course and pursue a European future. If not, alternative ‘eastern’ routes and options should be and have been considered.

Because of the fundamental nature of their difference, the two perspectives of Greece’s identity and mission have and continue to be easily turned into or correlated to crucial political debates. In this paper, it will be argued that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century the familiarity of the Greeks with this identity debate and their irreducible sensitivity over their past have turned this discussion into a handy instrument of political mobilization; a currency which has been spent lavishly and effectively by politicians to win over voters’ allegiance, and inflated by public, party and academic historians. In brief, despite Greece’s steady western and pro-European political orientation, reservation and occasionally even contempt for western culture has prevailed in the long run in various forms of fear of others, from the Jews and the Catholics to Europe and globalization; fears that touch upon delicate issues of self-determination. In other words, Europhobia, Euroscepticism and Europhilia have been and are still connected to unresolved historical questions that lie at the core of Greek national identity. Anti-westernism of every kind took on the function of a process suitable for the negative determination of Greekness. In a way, this negation of Europe and the West sounds like an indirect yet explicit proposal for re-fashioning an alternative Greek present and future, to be justified necessarily by an alternative Greek past.

### *1.*

During the long 19<sup>th</sup> century, the quest for its true past marked Greek intellectual and political life in various ways. In theory, it was the quest for ethnic continuity and the choice of a future mission. Unable and unprepared to opt for a civic and hospitable Hellenic identity, as the radical democrat Rigas Feraios had envisioned in the aftermath of the French Revolution, the Greeks had to define the ethnic content of

---

<sup>2</sup> “Romeic” is a medieval Greek term. It was the most common self-designation but has steadily declined since the Greek state was named “Hellas,” and been replaced by the adjective “Hellenic.”

their nation. To inherit the glory of the Ancients and secure their position as the genuine cradle of Europe, Modern Greeks had to disassociate themselves from their Byzantine tradition, conceal their Russophilia, alienate themselves from their Balkan Orthodox Slav brethren, and purify their spoken language. This was a demanding task. Then, the Greeks would illuminate the East in the same way they had illuminated the West after the Roman conquest. This was in principle the Greek Great Idea, officially pronounced by Premier Ioannis Kolettis in January 1844.<sup>3</sup> Essentially this eastern assignment was the bait for voluntary westernisation, i.e., for integration into the hitherto alien European world. Despite being covered with the mantle of a civilizing mission, it was widely perceived as a potential scheme of militant irredentism. In any case, westernization as a prerequisite for the eastern mission was almost undisputed by intellectuals throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> In practice, however, as an elitist project of modernization, fashioned in the West, imported by diaspora intellectuals and promoted by the Bavarian Catholic rulers, westernization was not shared by all Greeks inside their young kingdom; at least not with an open heart. What modern Greeks really were, was contrary what Europe expected them to become. Expressions of Europhobia inherited from the Byzantine and post-Byzantine past included Orthodox reaction to early Protestant educational initiatives in Greece (1835-48) and to the Bavarian planned ecclesiastical autonomy from the Ecumenical Patriarchate (1833-52). But there were other issues of domestic and foreign policy which were even more crucial to the cultivation of anti-western feelings: Reaction to administrative centralization, which was identified with the Bavarian rulers and the non-local Greek bureaucrats who sported European education, manners and dress; protest against the theory of Greek Slavic descent, coined by Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer in the 1830s; outcry against the Bavarian absolutist administration and the European creditors, after the 1843 bankruptcy;

<sup>3</sup> Dimitris Livanios, “The Quest for Hellenism: Religion, Nationalism, and Collective Identities in Greece, 1453-1913,” in *Hellenisms. Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Katerina Zacharia (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Elli Skopetea, *To «πρότυπο βασίλειο» και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα. Οψεις των εθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα (1830-1880)* (The “Model Kingdom” and the Great Idea. Aspects of the National Problem in Greece) (Athens: Polytypo, 1988), 171-8.

humiliation following the demand for neutrality, issued by the Powers during the Crimean War (1853-56); indignation over European indifference during the 1866 Cretan revolt and in many similar cases of insurgency in Macedonia during the Eastern Crisis (1877-78).<sup>5</sup>

All these expressions of reaction and antipathy to the West, whether directed at Protestants and Catholics, the Great Powers of Europe as a whole, Britain in particular, or western morals in general, shaped Greek policy, domestic and foreign. In other words, the debate over the predestined eastern mission of Greece was intertwined with the predicaments of state modernization and hectic irredentism. This confusion was inevitable for an additional reason: In the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Greece's relation to the East was reinforced by historians. The Byzantine missing link was hellenized and reinstated through the new cultural notion of Hellenic Christianity (*Ellinochristianismos*). This was not without criticism from westernizing historians, the second generation of the Greek Enlightenment, who resisted the direct involvement of religion in this academic debate over continuity. It was also criticized by those historians who favoured the medieval ecumenical ideal *versus* Greek nationalism.<sup>6</sup> This choice also had practical consequences: Byzantium had no friends and only foes in the Slavic Balkans and the Catholic West. Would they become the enemies of Modern Greece as well?

In theory, the endorsement of its eastern medieval past and culture did not derail Greece from its west-oriented track. In practise, to reconquer the East was an impossible mission for any politician or state official. Costly irredentism to the North-East was incompatible with modernization and not approved by Greece's protecting powers and

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lina Louvi, *H Ευρώπη των Ελλήνων. Πρότυπο, απειλή, προστάτις 1833-1857* (The Europe of the Greeks. Model, Threat, Protector 1833-1857) (Athens: Alexandreia, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> K.Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* (Modern Greek Enlightenment) (Athens: Ermis, 1989), 397-410; Dimitris Stamatopoulos, «Ο Μανουήλ Γεδεών και η επαναδιοργάνωση του οικουμενιστικού μοντέλου» (M. Gedeon and the Re-organization of the Ecumenist Model), in *Μνήμη Άλκη Αγγέλου. Τα άφθονα σχήματα του παρελθόντος: ζητήσεις της πολιτισμικής ιστορίας και της θεωρίας της λογοτεχνίας, Πρακτικά Ι' Επιστημονικής Συνάντησης* (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2004).

creditors. Yet it was the only mission fit for a nation established on and nourished by the pre-modern manly ideas of honour (*filotimo*) and unconditional bravery (*palikaria*).<sup>7</sup> If Europe was an impediment to this mission, then Greece could do without. For decades, the public discussion about the contempt, mockery and scorn with which the Greek vision was met by the Powers and their preferential treatment of the Balkan states –‘states without history’– reflected the troubled relationship Athens had with its neighbours, who turned from brethren into competitors and foes, as well as the hardships Greece faced to adjust to the capitalist and technological western paradigm.<sup>8</sup>

Unravelling the articulation of socio-economic criticism against Europe during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is of particular importance for our analysis. The selfish and brutal capitalism of Europe, it was argued, had overshadowed unselfish philhellenism. Greece was not related to ‘this old continent, which was torn apart by economic interests’ and ‘inflamed by monetary questions.’<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the hitherto shining social and economic model of the USA was also criticised on cultural grounds, to discourage mass emigration.<sup>10</sup> Inside Greece, wealth and state protection had favoured the rise of a new class, oriented towards western ideals, which had disrupted the unity and cultural homogeneity of the Greek people. In 1893, Theodoros Deligiannis, former Premier and then leader of the opposition, stated in Parliament that it was in Greece’s best interests to decelerate the adoption of new social morals and manners that were altogether alien

---

<sup>7</sup> John K. Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage. A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 268-74, 278-81.

<sup>8</sup> Vasilis K. Gounaris, *Ta Βαλκάνια των Ελλήνων από το Διαφωτισμό έως τον Α' Παγκόσμιο* (The Balkans of Greece from the Enlightenment to World War I) (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2007), 587-96.

<sup>9</sup> Georgios Varouxakis, “The Idea of ‘Europe’ in Nineteenth-Century Greek Political Thought,” in *Greece and Europe in the Modern Period*, ed. Philip Carabott (London: King’s College Centre for Hellenic Studies, 1995), 27.

<sup>10</sup> Kostas Diogos, «Το όραμα των Ελλήνων για την Αμερική, από τον Νεοελληνικό Διαφωτισμό μέχρι τον Α' Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο» (The Vision of the Greeks for America from the Greek Enlightenment to World War I) (PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2019), 396-408.

to and incompatible with Greek traditions.<sup>11</sup> Deligiannis was the leader of the National Party (*Ethnikon Komma*), which had absorbed the Russophiles, and the opponent of the Anglophilic Modernist Party (*Neoterikon Komma*) of Charilaos Trikoupis.

Party names were not accidental. Behind the formation of the National Party one can trace a parallel and well-known ideological process of paramount importance: The emphasis placed on the common people (*laos*) as the guarantor of Greek cultural originality, compared to the aforementioned imitators of the West, i.e., the European-educated intellectuals and the rising bourgeois class, unable to resist luxury and the temptation of the stock-market. This process, the Greek version of the German-inspired Occidentalism, included the making and rise of folk-science, as well as the shift from the purified Greek language (*katharevousa*) to the vernacular spoken by the people (*demotiki*). The language question was important for an additional reason: Greece had to decide which form of language was the most appropriate to disseminate its culture and to introduce the non-Greek speakers of the *irredenta* to Greek nationalism. The importance placed on the value of the common people was not only so as to bypass the cultural disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the unattainable paradigm of the West. Next to romantic nationalism Greek Socialism was also growing, fully dedicated to the demotic vernacular and federalism. The latter movement was against the involvement of the Great Powers in the politics of the East, not even as protectors of small nations.<sup>12</sup> From the Greek point of view, it was a transformation of the Byzantine imperial vision adapted to European federalism. Moreover, federalism reintroduced, from the left, the omnipotent and handy democratic vision of Rigas Feraios, conceived in the days of the French Revolution.

---

<sup>11</sup> Gunnar Hering, *Ta πολιτικά κόμματα στην Ελλάδα, 1821-1936* (Political Parties in Greece, 1821-1936), vol. I, n. 167 (Athens: Morfotiko Idryma Ethnikis Trapezis, 2008), 591.

<sup>12</sup> Loukianos Chasiotis, *Η ανατολική ομοσπονδία. Δύο ελληνικές φεντεραλιστικές κινήσεις του 19ου αιώνα* (The Eastern Federation. Two Greek Federalist Movements of the 19th Century) (Thessaloniki: Vanias, 2001).

## 2.

For two decades before the Great War, Greece experienced a deep crisis. Instead of revitalizing the East, the ‘model Kingdom’ had languished: Bankruptcy (1893), a humiliating defeat by the Ottoman Empire (1897), international public debt administration, corrupt parliamentary practices, a tough controversy with Bulgaria and Romania over Macedonia, worse relations with the Powers.<sup>13</sup> The Great Idea project, it was lamented, seemed doomed, because of the inability of the state to modernize and catch up with its neighbours’ achievements. This new kind of domestic critique, which explicitly set modernization as a prerequisite of effective irredentism, was extremely severe. Not even the King remained untouched. Greece, it was argued, needed deeds, strength, vigor, power, pure heroes, an ambitious vision, a challenging future, a strong executive power and a leader king. It was a quality step forward, but it did not imply that the required reforms should be modelled on the West. To achieve their goals, the Greek people needed to return to their roots, rediscover their own potential, and delve into their own cultural resources. They should revisit and inspect their past with the eyes of Makrigiannis, the recently (1907) discovered illiterate hero of the 1821 revolution, a religious man, anti-elitist and anti-European. Greeks needed to get rid of the Public Debt Administration mechanism, arm themselves to the teeth, and hate their enemies with passion. They should expect nothing from Europe. Their duty was to fight against subordination to the West, xenomania and slavishness, repel the materialism of a comfortable life, and decline Jewish-type cosmopolitanism. This was the view of the Demoticists fighting against stagnation and for revitalization; but it was also the view of the anti-Liberal Nationalists.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Jerry Augustinus, *Consciousness and History: Nationalistic Critics of Greek Society, 1897-1914* (New York: East European Quarterly, 1977); George Leontaritis, «Εθνικισμός και Διεθνισμός: Πολιτική Ιδεολογία» (Nationalism and Internationalism: Political Ideology), in *Ελληνισμός και Ελληνικότητα*, ed. D. G. Tsouassis (Athens: Estia, 1983), 27-35.

<sup>14</sup> Gounaris, *Ta Βαλκάνια των Ελλήνων*, 520-5; Thanasis Bochotis, *H ριζοσπαστική Δεξιά. Αντικοινοβουλευτισμός, συντηρητισμός και ανολοκλήρωτος φασισμός στην Ελλάδα 1864-1911* (The Radical Right. Anti-parliamentarism, Conservatism and Incomplete Fascism in Greece 1864-1911) (Athens: Vivliorama, 2003), 451.

These ideas were best expressed by two passionate intellectuals, Periklis Giannopoulos and Ion Dragoumis. Giannopoulos wrote: ‘It is impossible to generate Greek life, as long as all things and all ideas, from the cradle to the grave, are foreign. Striking xenomania is the first move, the first struggle for those who desire to fight for a fresh Greek start. Xenomania is crudity. It is vulgar. It is foolish. It is dis-honour. It is denial of patriotism. It is vanity. And it is ignorance.’<sup>15</sup> Xenomania was commonly identified as frankism (*frangismos*). This was a much older accusation and a very popular expression of scorn and shame, an implicit allegation that someone was denying Orthodoxy for Catholicism. A famous poet of the time, Kostis Palamas, tried to distinguish ‘frankism’ from ‘Europeanism’, the former being a pejorative term and the latter a substantial ingredient of Hellenism. But this was not easy at the time.<sup>16</sup> Dragoumis, on the other hand, declined both Western ideals and the Hellenic state. The latter, a by-product of the Jewish influenced European culture, had been forced, through classicism and the choice of an artificial vernacular, to live a false life. Inspired by his passion to liberate Macedonia from Bulgarian influence, Dragoumis created his own native and self-contained Greek cultural prototype; not to Hellenize the East but to integrate Greece and the East into a single entity, an Eastern Empire.<sup>17</sup>

After the military coup of 1909, the reforms introduced by Premier Eleftherios Venizelos and the victorious campaigns of the Balkan Wars, both modernizers and their opponents felt –and perhaps were– justified in their choices and ready for another round of triumphs in the East. By then, they were all inspired by bourgeois nationalism superbly serving modernization and irredentism.<sup>18</sup> But this match did not imply that Greece’s relations with the West had been decided. All these recent glories in the battlefield had a double reading: For some it

---

<sup>15</sup> Periklis Giannopoulos, «Η Ξενομανία» (Xenomania), *O Noumas* 1, no. 5 (1903): 4.

<sup>16</sup> Constantinos Th. Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος* (Constantinos Paparrigopoulos) (Athens: Ermis, 1986), 67.

<sup>17</sup> Varouxakis, op.cit., 28.

<sup>18</sup> Giorgos Th. Mavrogordatos, «Βενιζελισμός και αστικός εκσυγχρονισμός» (Venizelism and Bourgeois Modernization), in *Βενιζελισμός και αστικός εκσυγχρονισμός*, ed. G.Mavrogordatos–Ch. Hatziiosif (Irakleio: Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis, 1988), 10.

was a triumph of the true Greek spirit. This triumph included the deeds of the Greek brigands against Bulgarians in Macedonia; the abandonment of the embarrassing “impeccable stance,” i.e., the peaceful foreign policy persistently demanded from impoverished Greece by the Powers, in favour of the honourable alternative, aggression and war; the glory of the kilt-wearing *evzon* fighter, avenger of the nation’s foes, the heart and honour of the Greek soldier, a combination of pious soul and bloodthirsty superman; the Balkan Orthodox alliance against the crescent that Rigas Feraios would have blessed; the glory of King Constantine I, the soldier king, future emperor, chasing the primordial enemies of the nation to accomplish his mission in the East. Seen from a different angle, victory in the Balkan Wars was simply the triumph of urban rationalism, which, in a western manner, had provided for the suitable military and diplomatic preparation of the state. The initiative of the journal *Grammata* [Letters] in 1913, to address an open letter to well-known educated Greeks asking for their views on the future mission of Greece and its relationship with Europe, and the variety of responses it received clearly reveal that this relationship had not been resolved yet. Most answers were in favour of disassociation with the West or of selective contacts. ‘We shall borrow whatever we need but we shall be free debtors, not the helots of a foreign culture’, replied the radical intellectual Petros Vlastos, a keen supporter of the demotic vernacular. Professor of Theology Gregorios Papamichail, in his reply, stressed that ‘the European standard is entirely unsuitable for measuring our own affairs.’<sup>19</sup>

### 3.

Dragoumis’ vision of Empire contradicted the liberal vision of Venizelos, despite the quality services the latter had offered to Greek irredentism. In part, it also clashed with the socialist vision. Nationalists and Socialists shared contempt for foreign morals and the artificial *katharevousa*, but not admiration for German militarism. Nationalist Demoticists and romantic Nationalists placed their allegiance in the Party of the National Minded (*Komma Ethnikophronon*), which was

---

<sup>19</sup> Έρευνα για τις μελλοντικές κατευθύνσεις της φυλής (Research for the Future Direction of the Race) (Alexandreia: Grammata, 1919), 55, 80.

founded in 1915 by Dimitrios Gounaris to fight in Venizelos what they saw as the revival of the elitist and plutocratic reforms of the late Trikoupis. This does not imply that Gounaris' party was truly anti-European, despite occasional anti-western slogans; or that Gounaris embraced Dragoumis' vision of an Eastern Empire. He cared for the promotion of Greekness as a value, for the traditions of a 'small but honourable Greece.' His party, which in 1920 was renamed the People's Party (*Laikon Komma*) invested this particular concern with a strong, easily retrievable anti-western rhetoric that was adaptable to circumstance. This rhetoric, as we have argued elsewhere,<sup>20</sup> was crucial for the ideological development of the National Schism during the Great War (1915-17). It conveyed the impression that the choice between neutrality, supported by King Constantine and Gounaris, and participation in the cause of the Entente, supported by the Liberals of Venizelos, had a deeper meaning and far more important connotations.

The rhetoric of *Laikon Komma* against the Entente made use of slogans against western culture and its imitation. It stressed the substitution of philhellenism by financial interests, called for resistance to the will of the Powers and for the end of subordination. It criticized imperialism, colonialism, the Jews and the Greek plutocrats. A good example can be found in an article by Spyridon Melas in the *Neon Asty*:

"Venizelism is nothing but *frankism* [the imitation of the 'Franks'] in politics. Under the healthy surface lies hidden the most dangerous disease: Under the pretext of realism, [Venizelism] traded Greece as if it were a boat full of onions. Under the sign of progress, it excited individualism and mass opportunism. Under the pretext of renaissance, it tried to negate tradition. Under the pretext of alliance, it sought to settle the Frank in the heart of the country."<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Gounaris-Christopoulos, op.cit.

<sup>21</sup> Thanasis Bochotis, «Εσωτερική Πολιτική 1900-1922» (Domestic Politics 1900-1922), in *Iστορία της Ελλάδας του 20<sup>ού</sup> αιώνα*, ed. Ch. Chatziosif (Athens: Vivliorama, 2009), 96.

To the dedicated Greek Germanophiles, Germany stood for an imperial culture enriched with high humanist ideals, which had been forged through the deep and long contact of the Germans with the ancient Greek civilisation.<sup>22</sup> Germanism, like Hellenism, was the outcome of large-scale cultural dissemination. Unlike British culture, Germanism was focused not on the individual but on the whole nation.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, for them, the German Empire –even if it was part of the West– was the best model for an Eastern Greek Empire. In other words, the cultural advantages of Germany were its Greek roots and the imperial paradigm, most appropriate for the reunification of the East in the Byzantine fashion. Germanophilia, as a theory, clearly did not back the idea of western superiority; it was a mild expression of Greek chauvinism.

On the other hand, the most solid ideological argument of those who supported participation in the war alongside the Entente was the condemnation of the German militaristic, greedy and arrogant model of progress, seasoned with references to the threat it posed for small nations. They stressed negative characteristics similar to those attributed by the Germanophiles to the Anglo-French and their capitalist western civilisation. This view was shared by all the Entente states: German civilisation was the archetypical enemy of liberal democracy.<sup>24</sup> ‘The most typical imperialism of our times is the German one’, wrote George Papandreu, future Prime-Minister, ‘because it combines the tradition of Prussian feudalism with the vertigo of unleashed modern German progress.’<sup>25</sup> Apparently, anti-Germanism of this kind did not favour the image of Europe in general either.

<sup>22</sup> K. Sokolis, *Αυτοκρατορία* (Empire) (Athens: Angyra, 1915), 84-6.

<sup>23</sup> Vlasis Gavriilidis, *Δύο Πολιτισμοί* (Two Civilisations) (Athens: Akropolis, 1917), 70, 128; the same, *Η Αγγλική Πολιτική και ο Ελληνισμός υπό πρόην Διπλωμάτου* (British Politics and Hellenism Written by a Former Diplomat) (Athens: Akropolis, 1917).

<sup>24</sup> Despoina Papadimitriou, «Ο Τύπος και ο Διχασμός 1914-1917» (The Press and the Schism, 1914-1917) (PhD diss., National and Capodistrian University of Athens, 1990), 260-4.

<sup>25</sup> Georgios Papandreu, «Η Ευρώπη προ του Πολέμου» (Europe on the Eve of the War), *Επιθεώρησις των Κοινωνικών και Πολιτικών Επιστημών* 1, no. 1-2 (1916): 46-70.

All these were the terms of the on-going debate between nationalists, Socialists and Demoticists, which, of course, had to be adapted, sometimes improperly, to the military alliances of the time. In our view, this not unknown debate played an essential role in the making of the Greek National Schism. It is not speculative to argue that, with all its intensity and simplicity, it subdued and assimilated Greece's diplomatic and political war dilemmas in the East-West scheme and strengthened the anti-West critique at a time when liberalism seemed to be triumphing. It bequeathed to the Greek national imagination experiences and arguments which affected, to a certain degree, the interwar debate on what it meant to be Greek and European.<sup>26</sup>

In fact, in the 1920s, criticism of Europe, represented by Britain and France, intensified because of the negative role they played during the Asia Minor campaign and catastrophe (1921-22). Their 'betrayal' was due to financial interests that weighed heavier than their principles. King Constantine, himself, wrote to his Italian mistress in 1921 from Smyrna that 'the idiot European audience can not comprehend that we are fighting here for the freedom of our co-nationals.'<sup>27</sup> A year later the Press was no less aggressive: 'today's France, totally indifferent to old France that had once won the sympathy of the whole world, cares only for money. Christian brotherhood, peace in the world, prosperity in the East are values which have been kept outside the stock market of French political morals. French consciousness is only sensitive to the influence of gold.'<sup>28</sup> In fact, the Press remarked, it was not just the French who were interested in the riches of Syria or the British in the oil of Mosul, but all the big capitalists of Europe who trusted that Kemalist Turkey would prove 'obedient and willing to make concessions' like the Ottoman Empire of Abdul Hamid had been in the past.<sup>29</sup> All these bankers had placed their bets on the warring Greeks and Turks as if it was a bullfight.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, poor

<sup>26</sup> Gounaris-Christopoulos, op.cit.

<sup>27</sup> Giorgos Th.Mavrogordatos, *Tα γράμματα στην Πάολα. Τι μας λένε για τον Κωνσταντίνο Α'* (The Letters to Paola. What they tell us about Constantine I of Greece) (Athens: Patakis, 2019), 107.

<sup>28</sup> *Kathimerini*, 13-1-1922.

<sup>29</sup> *Kathimerini*, 23-1-1922.

<sup>30</sup> *Kathimerini*, 17-3-1922.

Greece lacked coal, oil or Indians,<sup>31</sup> so its defeat was predestined. After the bombardment and brief occupation of Corfu (1923), Italy and Mussolini also fell into disfavour, accused of “kaizerist imperialism and fascist greed.”<sup>32</sup> The material culture of the USA did not escape criticism either, for they had failed to protect democracy and liberty.

It is also worth keeping in mind that anti-westernism of the lower strata was affected in the 1920s by the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar. The implementation of the new calendar overlapped with the abolition of the monarchy, thus promoting the idea that Greek tradition was being uprooted by the liberal, anti-royalist modernizers. For the Old Calendarists conformity with the West meant subordination to the Pope and denial of the ‘pure Greek element’ that had prevented religious assimilation in the past.<sup>33</sup> As one citizen put it: Since the Greek Orthodox Church had been subordinated to Rome ‘we will turn into Franks and Protestants, who don’t believe in saints, then we shall lose our faith in Christ and God; we shall end up atheist Free Masons.’<sup>34</sup>

The same strong antipathy for the West was expressed by the recently (1918) established Greek Socialist, and by then (1924) Communist, Party (*Kommounistikon Komma Ellados* or KKE), in rather similar and familiar rhetoric, despite the different phrasing. The Communist Party was against the Imperialism of the West, against the Entente powers strangling the rights of the Eastern People, and against the Greek bourgeois class, obedient and humble servant of the English and French, guardian of European and American capitalist interests alike. This view was given the necessary historical depth by Gianis Kordatos, a communist historian, in his book on the social meaning of the 1821 Greek Revolution (1924). The emphasis he placed on the so-

<sup>31</sup> *Kathimerini*, 28-9-1922.

<sup>32</sup> *Makedonia*, 23-9-1923.

<sup>33</sup> Alkis Rigos, *Η δεύτερη ελληνική δημοκρατία 1924-1935. Κοινωνικές διαστάσεις της πολιτικής σκηνής* (The Second Greek Republic 1924-1935. Social Dimensions of the Political Scene) (Athens: Themelio, 1988), 215; *Phoni tis Orthodoxias*, 1-4-1928.

<sup>34</sup> Nikolaos Kasdaglis, «Ο αντίκτυπος του ημερολογιακού εκκλησιαστικού ζητήματος στον Τύπο της Αθήνας (1924)» (The Impact of the Calendarist Ecclesiastical Question on the Press of Athens) (MA diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki & National Capodistrian University of Athens, 2018), 55.

cial motives of the uprising was widely perceived as a serious challenge to the omnipotent will of the nation as the driving force of history. It foreshadowed subjugation to the Soviets' ideology and policy, and cost him an assassination attempt. Britain topped the list of Kordatos' and the KKE's enemies, as the primary suspect of a future attack on the Soviet Union. For the Communists, Venizelos was nothing more than a humble lackey of the English, French and American capitalists. Germany was added to the list of people's enemies after the rise of the Nazi Party (1933), as was Italy, following its attack on Ethiopia (1935). Indeed, for the KKE, neither of the two military alliances under formation was any less evil. The communist critique of Capitalism became identical to anti-westernism, as the Soviet Union motherland transformed into the indisputable eastern cradle of the Balkan nations and the sponsor of their federation. Moreover, the Communists expropriated both the traditional contempt of the lower class for wealth and luxury, and the bitterness all Greeks harboured for the role the powers had played in the Asia Minor catastrophe. All in all, in the light of the Greek-Turkish War and the interwar financial crisis, antipathy for the West and for Europe increasingly cut across all political parties, taking full advantage of existing negative stereotypes.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4.

Reconsidering the National Schism as an episode within the broader Greek quest for equilibrium between the East and the West facilitates comprehension of the search for *hellenicity*, which the bourgeois generation of the 1930s launched; a magnificent effort to repair the lost cohesion of the Greek nation by bringing up its cultural authenticity. Europe was not dismissed as capitalist or corrupt. Instead, Greece was challenged to compare its own cultural impact and prove itself, if not superior, at least an equal partner in the making of European culture. Greece was no longer perceived as a student of the West, but able and

---

<sup>35</sup> KKE, *Επίσημα Κείμενα* (Official Documents), vol. I: 12, 83, 124, 163, 196, 254-55, 382; vol. II: 52, 183, 292, 370, 418; vol. III: 37, 141-42, 147; vol. IV: 13-34, 132-6, 227, 232-5, 326-7.

destined to lead the cultural refashioning of Europe.<sup>36</sup> This was the ambition of German-educated intellectuals like Konstantinos Tsatsos and Panayotis Kanelopoulos. The idealistic, anti-materialistic and utopic vision of Hellenism produced by this generation of artists and intellectuals was expected to heal the wounds that old-fashioned, chauvinistic nationalism and irredentism had caused the nation and, at the same time, check the alternative remedy, communist-inspired class solidarity. However, this new idealism, as Katerina Pa-pari has argued, supported a new ideological schism that would soon become political. The new vision or illusion of idealism went along-side with loyalty to the monarchy, restored in 1935, and fierce anti-Communism. If there were ‘true Greeks,’ who shared idealism, there were obviously false one too, i.e., the Communists, favouring materialism. This narrative of idealistic Greekness, and especially of Greek cultural superiority, was constructed in the 1930s of such durable materials that it survived thereafter and was selectively exploited by various subsequent regimes.<sup>37</sup>

The dictatorial regime of Ioannis Metaxas (1936-41) was the first to be inspired by the prospect of Greek cultural superiority. Metaxas himself acknowledged the technological superiority of the West and was positively inclined towards the transfusion of technology to Greece. But he was set against the West in all matters of morals, art and culture, having in mind his own dream of a third Greek civilization, following the ancient and the medieval stages: ‘We do not want foreign cultures. We want a culture of our own in this corner of Europe, which we shall push forward and make superior to all others’, he declared.<sup>38</sup> Greeks lacked self-confidence and appreciated as artistic

<sup>36</sup> Dimitris Tziovas, *O μύθος της γενιάς των Τριάντα. Νεοτερικότητα, ελληνικότητα και πολιτισμική ιδεολογία* (The Myth of the 1930s Generation. Modernity, Greekness and Cultural Ideology) (Athens: Polis, 2011), 256-9.

<sup>37</sup> Katerina Papari, *Ελληνικότητα και αστική διανόηση στον Μεσοπόλεμο. Το πολιτικό πρόγραμμα των Π. Κανελλόπουλου, Ι. Θεοδωρακόπουλου και Κ. Τσάτσου* (Greekness and Bourgeois Intellectuality in the Interwar Period. The Political Programme of P. Kanelopoulos, I. Theodorakopoulos and K. Tsatsos) (Athens: Asini, 2017), 105-6.

<sup>38</sup> Georgia Kontou, «Η πολιτική και κοινωνική ιδεολογία της 4<sup>ης</sup> Αυγούστου και ο τρόπος με τον οποίο αυτή επηρέασε την εκπαίδευση και τη νεολαία (EON)» (The Political and Social Ideology of the 4th of August Regime and the Way it Affected Education and the Youth) (PhD diss., University of Ioannina, 2013), 275.

only what was imported from Europe. There was no desire for works which expressed Greek feelings, he complained.<sup>39</sup> Yet, despite his confidence in Greek culture, his regime was unable to resist the temptation of anti-western stereotypes, most appropriate in assuring the support of peasants and the working classes. In the monthly review *To Neon Kratos* there are frequent hints, inserted by intellectuals supporting Metaxas, against loose western morals, impurity in sexual relations, suffragettism and feminism. There are also warnings against the ‘infection’ of Greece by western intellectuals and the growth of Communism as a by-product of Liberalism, in the context of the wider Metaxist condemnation of western parliamentarianism and capitalism.<sup>40</sup> Metaxas argued: ‘This democracy is an expression either of Communism or of Capitalism. It is the instrument with which the will of Capitalism is presented as the will of the people.’<sup>41</sup> Immorality in the West as a result of either Communism or Capitalism, and the need to restore morality in Greek society, were the arguments favoured by high school professors of Theology and various religious organizations in the interwar period, to achieve the social integration of the petty-bourgeois strata. It has been argued that this was a substitute to divert social struggles and a perfect means to adjust the natural conservatism of the lower classes to the ideological needs of the dictatorial regime.<sup>42</sup>

### 5.

Given the interwar development of anti-westernism, German propaganda in occupied Greece did not have to invent new material against the western allies. The Anglophilic regime of Metaxas was accused of

<sup>39</sup> Ioannis Metaxas, *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* (Speeches and Thoughts) (Athens: Ikaros, 1969), vol. I, 434.

<sup>40</sup> Kontou, op.cit., 117, 120, 140-152, 195-7, 215-20, 286-88; Panagiotis Noutsos, «Ιδεολογικές συνιστώσες του καθεστώτος της 4<sup>ης</sup> Αυγούστου» (The Ideological Components of the 4th of August Regime), *Ta Ιστορικά* 3, no. 5 (1986).

<sup>41</sup> Metaxas, op.cit., vol. II, 439.

<sup>42</sup> Polykarpos Karamouzis, «Κράτος, εκκλησία και εθνική ιδεολογία στη νεότερη Ελλάδα: κλήρος, θεολόγοι και θρησκευτικές οργανώσεις στον μεσοπόλεμο» (State, Church and National Ideology in Modern Greece: Clergy, Theologians and Religious Organizations in the Interwar Period) (PhD diss., Panteion University of Athens, 2004).

co-operating with the ‘Jewish league of Freemasons’ and the ‘London plutocrats’, those well-known usurers who had been exploiting Greece since 1821. In fact, the Germans employed all anti-British assertions used in the National Schism era and beyond: The Don Pacifico naval blockade (1850), English oppression in the Ionian Islands, military intervention in 1915, the ‘betrayal of Smyrna’, the occupation and colonization of Cyprus.<sup>43</sup> The negative image of rotten British-dominated Europe was counter-posed against “Das neue Europa” of the third Reich, a true crusader against Asiatism, Bolshevism and its Jewish agents, the enemies of true Europe.<sup>44</sup> Greece had a role to play in a national-socialist Europe, the enemy of Panslavism and of the American capitalists, because this German-ruled Europe was the product of ancient Greek thinkers. That is what Premier George Tsolakoglou wrote to Hitler, seconded by his minister of Finance Sotirios Gotzamanis.<sup>45</sup> It is interesting that, in this bizarre pro-European rhetoric of the Naziphiles, one can trace the implicit anti-western argument which had been articulated during World War I by the Germanophiles: Greek culture would only shine and be acknowledged in a German-ruled world. Skythic Bolshevik and Anglosaxonism were its mortal enemies.<sup>46</sup> It was a struggle of idealism against materialism, after all, and the place of Greece in this tug-of-war had been crystallized long ago. Capitalism and Socialism could not substitute the will of the nation.

The Greek Communist Party would only partly disagree with this conclusion. Since the beginning of the war against Italy (Oct. 1940), it had not altered its anti-British (and French) attitude, because it was London that had dragged Greece into a war against Italy. Greece, in

<sup>43</sup> Hagen Fleischer, «Η ναζιστική προπαγάνδα στην κατοχή: Ένα διφορούμενο όπλο» (Nazi Propaganda during the Occupation: An Ambiguous Weapon), in *Ελλάδα 1936-1944. Δικτατορία, κατοχή, αντίσταση*, ed. H. Fleiser–N. Svoronos (Athens: Morfotiko Idryma Ethnikis Trapezis, 1990).

<sup>44</sup> Alexandra Patrikiou, «Απεικονίσεις της γηραιάς ηπείρου: Ο διάλογος για την Ευρώπη στην Ελλάδα, 1941-46» (Images of the Old Continent. The Debate about Europe in Greece, 1941-46) (PhD diss., Panteion University of Athens, 2012), 100-59.

<sup>45</sup> Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece. The Experience of Occupation 1941-44* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993), 80; Patrikiou, op.cit., 121.

<sup>46</sup> Patrikiou, op.cit., 148.

the KKE's view, should have remained neutral in co-operation with the Balkan states and the Soviet Union.<sup>47</sup> Of course, after the German attack against the USSR, the Party turned against the German-Italian fascist axis and in favour of the 'great allies.' But it never attributed to the Westerners any merit other than their war achievements. No mention whatsoever was made of their liberal regimes struggling against fascism. Such courtesy was in short supply.

#### 6.

When the war was over, defeated Germany and Italy, despised by all for their monstrosities, posed no threat and needed no attention or pre-emptive verbal attacks by KKE.<sup>48</sup> They were done with. Therefore, it was extremely easy for the Communist Party to train its fire on Britain anew and re-start its anti-British, interwar campaign. This time London was accused of allying itself with the 'Black Front', the monarch-fascists (i.e. the royalists) and the quislings, to accomplish the long-standing Anglosaxonic mission, which was to turn Greece into a colony of the Empire. In 1946, Gianis Kordatos published his study "English Interventions in Greece", repeating one by one all the anti-British accusations manufactured by the Germanophiles in both world wars. As Greece delved into a civil war and the USA took over its maintenance and defence, the Americans replaced the British in all communist slogans. The pejorative terms 'American masters', 'Americanocracy' and 'American imperialism' frequented any text produced by the KKE. The American gangsters were robbing Greece and treating her like a financial enterprise. They wanted this land as an instrument of their rural policy, a market for their products without any industry, a colony to provide them with meat for their canons. This was the view of the KKE when the Greek Civil War was over and did not change at all in the following decades.<sup>49</sup>

To put it bluntly, the ocean of anti-Americanism in the 1950s and 60s by far exceeds the limits of the communist Press. It has been ar-

---

<sup>47</sup> KKE, *op.cit.*, vol. V, 11-34.

<sup>48</sup> Maria Kallitsi, «Η εικόνα του γερμανού κατακτητή στην ελληνική λογοτεχνία» (The Image of the German Conqueror in Greek Prose) (PhD diss., University of Crete, 2007), 46-175; *Embros*, 28-6-1946, 3.

<sup>49</sup> KKE, *op.cit.*, vol. VI, 20-30, 79-80, 136-7, 145-7, 168-9, 174-5, 218-24.

ticulated by Ioannis Stefanidis (2007) that the widespread anti-western explosion, which targeted first Britain and then the USA, followed the failure of post-World War II irredentism, chiefly disappointment over the Cyprus Question. This ‘little Great Idea’, the annexation of Cyprus, had brought Greeks out into the streets, demonstrating against their former and present allies, accusing their politicians of subordination or *rayathism* (from the Turkish *raya* meaning the passive flock). It was a handy slogan with explicit references to the shameful fear of revolting against the Ottomans in the pre-1821 era. The Left, in the light of the Cyprus Question, Turkish aggression and American military presence in Greece, made extensive use of it in the 1950s and 60s. It provided a unique opportunity to accuse the liberal and conservative royalist governments, i.e., the Right, with the use of patriotic slogans, without any reference to class interests. It easily connected anti-imperialism with nationalism and patriotism, based on the assumption that whatever was western was imperialistic and therefore in conflict with national/patriotic interests. This was a crusade that continuously appealed to the Greek sense of honour: Greece was not a pathetic receiver of slaps, nor some poor relative, bowing to the will of NATO. The governments of the Right, argued the Left opposition, were handling Greek national questions by cowering and bending their back.<sup>50</sup> This shameful practice had to stop; but joining the European Common Market was not going to help in that direction. According to the leftist *Avgi*<sup>51</sup> membership was to prove ‘a grand slam to full economic and political subjugation to foreign monopolies.’ The future of the country, it warned, would be grim, because Greece was destined to become fodder for the powerful west European trusts. There was, however, in the 1960s, behind this rhetoric of ‘independence,’ another implicit

<sup>50</sup> Ioannis D Stefanidis, *Stirring the Greek Nation. Political Culture. Irredentism and Anti-Americanism in Post-War Greece, 1945-1967* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 110-123; Zinovia Lialiouti, *Ο Αντιαμερικανισμός στην Ελλάδα 1947-1989* (Anti-americanism in Greece 1947-1989) (Athens: Asini, 2016), 130; Andreas Pantazopoulos, «Για το λαό και το έθνος». *Η στιγμή του Ανδρέα Παπανδρέου 1965-1989* (“For the People and the Nation.” The Moment of Andreas Papandreou 1965-1989) (Athens: Polis, 2001), 103-8.

<sup>51</sup> *Avgi*, 29-7-1959.

demand:<sup>52</sup> The unqualified identification of the government and the Palace with American policy legitimized the Left and Centre-Left parties to portray themselves as the true defenders of Greek honour. The restitution of Greek honour, however, implied and at the same time justified demands for social modernization and democratization. Eventually this tactic of anti-Americanism in defence of national honour effectively challenged the post-Civil War anti-communist, national-minded ideology (*ethnikophrosyni*).

Stefanidis<sup>53</sup> has studied the public speeches of the Centre-Right Parties against the USA and Lialiouti<sup>54</sup> has increased the documentation through the study of the Press. It is clear that Centre-Right allegations were very similar to those of the Centre-Left. They focused on Greek national pride and honour, insulted by the nouveau riche attitude and unrefined behaviour of American military personnel in Greece exploiting the rights of extraterritorial jurisdiction. Yes-men politicians of the Right were unable to defend the nation against daily insults or, more importantly, extract support from the USA, as tension with Turkey was growing. In the aftermath of the September 1955 pogrom in Istanbul, the centre-wing newspaper *Ta Nea* commented with sarcasm:

“As they saw us flat broken, they gave us pocket money in memory of our struggles for civilization and liberty, but at the same time they fumbled our ground, as if it was land without a fence, to find convenient shelter [...] they gave us a few pounds, a few dollars, they acquired military installations, they settled in our own house, they run our politics, they administer our economy, they decide when we shall talk and when we shall not, when we shall get angry and when we shall be appeased...”<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Lialiouti, *O Αντιαμερικανισμός*, 144-6.

<sup>53</sup> Stefanidis, *op.cit.*, 169-90.

<sup>54</sup> Lialiouti, *O Αντιαμερικανισμός*, 81-91.

<sup>55</sup> Lialiouti, *O Αντιαμερικανισμός*, 87.

Invoking insult obviously did not imply support for communist ideology. It was a well-understood reference to Greek values, violated by the Westerners.

Whatever was the political origin of anti-Americanism in the 1950s and 60s, it had an additional quality. It was not only fighting against national dependence and humiliation but it was also protecting the nation from acculturation. Greeks were encouraged by the KKE to engage in an unyielding struggle against ‘this new Great Idea which was wearing an American suit and was propagating the American way of life.’ This ‘servile Great Idea’ meant ‘the negation of national traditions, national subjugation, catastrophic cosmopolitanism and intellectual darkness.’ There ought to be ‘a relentless struggle against the organised attempt of Americanocracy to corrupt our people with abundant literature promoting pornography, gangsterism and warmongery; a struggle against corrupting “intellectual” output and film production.’ In the Second Plenum of the KKE (April 1952), the Greek people were urged to ‘condemn and boycott American gangster books, magazines, films and theatre, all of which disseminated the decadence of the plutocrats and American corruption.’ This was, above all, the responsibility of Greek women, ‘who would fight against corruption and defend our traditions and homes from violation by the American gangsters.’ It was the people’s responsibility, the Communists claimed, to negate the influence of Sunday Schools and Scouts, which were trying to alienate the youth from the Greek people’s fighting tradition and to insert submission by promoting the American way of life. It was the exclusive duty of the people to fight against acculturation, because ‘the bourgeois class, the plutocrats, more and more often, more and more clearly were moving away from the nation’s interest, from the nation itself.’ This social class was turning into an ‘anti-national, cosmopolitan puppet of American imperialism.’<sup>56</sup> The same warning, the separation of the bourgeois class from the nation’s body, had been expressed as early as 1878.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> KKE, *op.cit.*, vol. VI, 318-25, 339-40, 458-63; VII: 16, 21, 26, 52, 65-7, 76, 200, 214-26, 327.

<sup>57</sup> Skopetea, *op.cit.*, 242.

Public opinion polls reaffirmed the overwhelming influence of American culture, the role of cinema and music in the shaping of a positive American image; therefore, the concern of the Left over this matter was justified.<sup>58</sup> The hard-core anti-American slogans of the KKE were produced chiefly from exile. Inside Greece, the Leftist newspaper *Avgi* was not short of contempt, but in a more subtle way. In 1955, it described American society as being full of hatred and lamented the poisoning of Greek traditions and family values by American cultural influence.<sup>59</sup> In 1958, it wondered sarcastically at the culture of American military personnel, ‘men getting drunk, inclined to indulgence, provocative, disrespectful to Greece, to our women, our morals, our tolerance, to the patience of Romios,’ i.e., the archetypical pre-modern Greek-Orthodox. These Americans had legal rights only inside the bars and brothels of the Troumba region next to the port of Piraeus. ‘But outside Troumba,’ *Avgi* warned, ‘there is the Greek family, the struggle to make ends meet, thirst for quiet and moral living.’<sup>60</sup>

Not surprisingly, in the early 1960s such views against hollow cosmopolitanism and the blue-jean culture were shared by the Leftist Lambrakis Democratic Youth Organisation, headed by composer Mikis Theodorakis, constantly worrying about musical acculturation and Americanisation. In 1957, it was estimated that 35% of Greeks thought that American music was a bad influence and preferred Greek folk and pop songs. Most likely among them were not only voters of the Left. Stefanidis<sup>61</sup> mentions an article in the state-sponsored magazine *Gnoseis* which condemned the mimicking of American culture because it threatened Greek tradition. This was not exceptional. In fact, the Left and the Centre were not alone in their struggle against the Americans. The conservative Right was also concerned with the rejuvenation of Greek youth, drifting away from tradition, adopting foreign habits and manners and turning, in a word, into “teddy boys,”

---

<sup>58</sup> Stefanidis, *op.cit.*, 247.

<sup>59</sup> Lialiouti, *O Αντιαμερικανισμός*, 265.

<sup>60</sup> Lialiouti, *O Αντιαμερικανισμός*, 266-7.

<sup>61</sup> Stefanidis, *op.cit.*, 248-51.

a term identifying them automatically with the specific British subculture, which already had a record of illegal and violent activities.<sup>62</sup>

Right-wing intellectuals, in general, judged that western materialism was unable to counter-balance the influence of communist ideology and was opposed by nature to the idealism of Hellenic Christianity.<sup>63</sup> Back in the days of the Civil War, the powerful and popular brotherhood of theologians ‘Zoe,’ famous for its social activism in favour of the unprivileged, combined anti-communist rhetoric with a wider critique of the materialist Enlightened West, which had undermined Christianity and paved the way for atheism. Although ‘Zoe’ did express a kind of favourable neutrality towards the liberal regimes of the West and to the USA, it never ceased to disapprove of urban, cosmopolitan liberalism and never hid its preference for the lower social strata, the common people, who were the real agents of Hellenic-Christian culture. For the true Christians there could be no compromise with either Communism or Capitalism.<sup>64</sup> For Professor Christos Giannaras, the expression of mild anti-western conservatism of ‘Zoe’ and other para-church organizations in the early 1960s constituted their reaction to a growing yet profound debate over the future direction of Greek theology.<sup>65</sup> Father Georgios Metallinos wrote that in

<sup>62</sup> Despoina Papadimitriou, *Από τον λαό των νομιμοφρόνων στο έθνος των εθνικοφρόνων: η συντηρητική σκέψη στην Ελλάδα 1922-1967* (From the Law Obeying People to the Nation of the National Minded. Conservative Thought in Greece 1922-1967) (Athens: Savvalas, 2006), 283-4.

<sup>63</sup> Meletis Meletopoulos, *Ιδεολογία Του Δεξιού Κράτους 1949-1967. Επίσημος πολιτικός λόγος και κυριαρχη ιδεολογία στην μετεμφυλιακή Ελλάδα* (The Ideology of the Right-wing State 1949-1967. Formal Speech and Dominant Ideology in Post Civil War Greece) (Athens: Papazisis, 1993).

<sup>64</sup> Maria Siganou, «Ιδεολογικές συνιστώσες του θρησκευτικού λόγου στον Εμφύλιο πόλεμο: Το παράδειγμα της Ζωής» (The Ideological Components of the Religious Speech during the Civil War. The Case of Zoe), *Ta Iστορικά* 48 (2008); Vasileios N. Makrides, “Orthodoxy in the Service of Anticommunism: The Religious Organization ‘Zoe’ during the Greek Civil War,” in *The Greek Civil War. Essays on a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences*, ed. Ph. Carabott-Th.D. Sfikas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 168; Giorgos Papathanasopoulos, *Εμφύλιες μάχες ιδεών. Ο ιδεολογικός εμφύλιος πόλεμος στην Ελλάδα 1946-1960* (Civil Battles of Ideas. The Civil War of Ideas in Greece 1946-1960) (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2018), 63-73.

<sup>65</sup> Christos Giannaras, *Ορθοδοξία και Δύση στη νεότερη Ελλάδα* (Orthodoxy and the West in Modern Greece) (Athens: Domos, 1992), 436-7.

1959, when the process for Greece to become an EEC member was initiated, some theologians and clergymen sensed the spiritual and cultural impact of this integration and the potential devaluation of theology in the eyes of the political leadership, which was only concerned with technological innovation. That was the reason why in 1962 they demonstrated vigorously for more theology teaching positions in high schools.<sup>66</sup> The convention of Orthodoxy with the Left was forthcoming. The meeting point was the fight against the ideological hegemony of the West.

The 1967 dictatorship, the so-called Junta, suspended for seven years the widespread political convergence over anti-Americanism, for an obvious reason: The basic slogan, “National Independence,” could no longer be expressed in public. Strong anti-American slogans were heard again only in the rallies of November 1973, during the uprising of the Polytechnic School. Meanwhile, in the context and aftermath of the May 1968 turbulence in Paris, the dictators preserved intact all existing reservations about western culture. They fitted in perfectly with their own ideological slogan “Hellas of Greek Christians” (*Hellas Hellinon Christianon*) and they were shared by all Greeks alike, Leftists and church-goers. The argument used by the dictators’ first Foreign Minister, the diplomat Panayotis Pipinelis, when Greece withdrew from the Council of Europe in late 1969, to avoid condemnation and expulsion for the use of torture is most indicative. Anarchic and revolutionary tendencies, he said, were corrupting the social and intellectual power of the West, they have paralyzed its resistance and endangered western culture and democracy. Greece, however, was resisting these tendencies and would shape its ‘new republican construction,’ making use of its own ‘national peculiarities.’<sup>67</sup> Ioannis Ladas, Minister of Interior, talked about ‘the rotten foreign youths, sinking into the marsh of drugs, pansexualism, decadence and degeneration, wandering astray in the streets of big cities, without dreams, ideals, hopes, without future’. His rhetoric was full of hatred for the

<sup>66</sup> Georgios Metallinos, *Για την Ευρώπη μας με αγάπη* (To our Europe with Love) (Athens: Akritas, 2004), 19-20; the same, *Θεολογικός Αγώνας, 1962. Ιστορία* (Theological Struggle, 1962. History) (Athens: Parousia, 1989), 130-5; Papadimitriou, *Από τον λαό των νομιμοφρόνων*, 283.

<sup>67</sup> *To Vima*, 16-10-1969, 6; 21-12-1969, 2.

West, support for those who had demonstrated against the British and the Americans and in favour of the union of Cyprus with Greece, outbursts of national pride, illusions of grandeur, and criticism against foreign music. In the speeches of Georgios Georgalas, the most well-known theorist of the dictatorial regime, criticism of western consumerist societies was linked to their tendency towards Communism which could only be checked by enlightened anti-Communism. In the writings of Professor Dimitris Tsakonas, Minister of Culture, western parliamentarism was judged unsuitable for Greece. He suggested enlightened despotism with a national policy, sensitive to Orthodoxy, oriented to the East, following the example of Ion Dragoumis.<sup>68</sup>

## 7.

After the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, criticism against the western parliamentary system stopped. Anti-Americanism, however, was restored to its former track. The quest for political independence was the meeting point of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) with the recently legalized KKE and all the other parties of the Centre and Left. Contempt for the American way of life, from disco to fast food, and care for the protection of Greek morals was the meeting point of PASOK with conservative voters. In the aftermath of a dictatorship, allegedly masterminded by the CIA, all political parties exploited anti-Americanism to reach the sentiments of the common people. With the political dominance of PASOK and the global renunciation of post-war *ethikofrosyni* in the 1980s, this patriotic rhetoric turned into fully-fledged populism. Andreas Papandreou, party leader and Prime-Minister, focused on the uniqueness and loneliness of the Greek nation, its culture of resistance, which had been eternally threatened by conspiracies, forged in the West, and demanded the re-hellenisation of Greece. Thus, anti-Americanism turned into an ingredient of Greek nationalism and a challenger of American-inspired, post-modernist vagueness and

<sup>68</sup> Meletis Meletopoulos, *H δικτατορία των συνταγματαρχών. Κοινωνία, ιδεολογία, οικονομία* (The Colonels' Dictatorship. Society, Ideology, Economy) (Athens: Papazisis, 1996), 187-92, 211-34, 243-55; Richard Clogg, «Η ιδεολογία της ‘Επαναστάσεως της 21<sup>ης</sup> Απριλίου 1967’» (The Ideology of the ‘21<sup>st</sup> April 1967 Revolution’), in *H Ελλάδα κάτω από στρατιωτικό ψυχό*, ed. Giorgos Giannopoulos–Richard Clogg (Athens: Papazisis, 1972), 81-112.

uncertainty.<sup>69</sup> It is interesting to note that this anti-Americanism, expressed in the popular slogan ‘EEC and NATO belong to the same syndicate,’ also fuelled resistance to union with the European Economic Community. PASOK and KKE agreed that this western, NATOist Europe was a puppet of the American monopolies and trusts; unwanted by the workers. The EEC was going to keep Greece fastened to the track of capitalism; it was a pit of lions, the doom of Greek economy. After the demise of *ethnikofrosyni*, the historical paradigm was adjusted accordingly. It was the time for writing social history, time for the people’s heroes to be granted state pensions and be introduced into history schoolbooks, from Makrygiannis to the WWII resistance fighters and the Civil War communist guerrillas.<sup>70</sup>

In this context, the final convergence of Orthodox and Socialist criticism of the EEC was not a coincidence. The late Bishop of Florina, Avgoustinos Kandiotis, perhaps the most conservative bishop in the post-war era, stated in 1977 that for Greece the EEC was as negative as NATO and American military bases had been. All of these resulted, in his view, in the invasion of Greece by lovers of evil, adventurers, materialists, and the godless.<sup>71</sup> His aggressive anti-western style was unmatched. Yet it was the Greek neo-Orthodox approach, the product of an exchange between Leftist intellectuals and theologians at its peak in the 1980s, that influenced the quality of anti-

<sup>69</sup> Lialiouti, *O Αντιαμερικανισμός*, 313 ff.; Zinovia Lialiouti, *O άλλος Ψυχρός Πόλεμος. Η αμερικανική πολιτιστική διπλωματία στην Ελλάδα 1953-1973* (The Other Cold War. American Cultural Diplomacy in Greece) (Irakleio: Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis, 2019); Andreas Pantazopoulos, *Λαϊκισμός και εκσυγχρονισμός, 1965-2005. Απορίες και κίνδυνοι μιας μαχητικής συμβίωσης* (Populism and Modernization 1965-2005. Questions and Risks of a Symbiosis with Fights) (Athens: Estia, 2011), 57-91; Pantazopoulos, «Για το λαό και το έθνος», 142-8.

<sup>70</sup> *To Vima*, 14-10-1977, 5; *Ta Nea*, 15-11-1977, 11; 16-11-1977, 7; 14-4-1980, 19; *Rizospastis*, 13-6-1975, 1, 7; Giorgos Antoniou-Eleni Paschaloudi, «‘Το άψογο πρόσωπο της ιστορίας θολώνει.’ Η αναγνώριση της Εαμικής αντίστασης και το πολιτικό σύστημα (1945-1995)» [‘The Impeccable Facade of History is Blurred.’ The Recognition of EAMist Resistance and the Political System (1945-1995)], in *Ηρωες των Ελλήνων. Οι καπετάνιοι, τα παληκάρια και η αναγνώριση των εθνικών αγώνων, 19ος-20ός αιώνας*, ed. V.K. Gounaris (Athens: Idryma tis Voulis, 2014).

<sup>71</sup> See <https://www.avgoustinos-kandiotis.gr/?p=40986> and <https://choratouaxoritou.gr/?p=65967>, where extracts of his sermons and articles.

westernism the most. It re-introduced the importance of the Byzantine tradition of St Gregory Palamas and re-enforced criticism of western rationalism. In 1985, father Mettalinos, the most renowned representative of Greek neo-Orthodoxy, expressed his views as a Eurosceptic rather than as an Orthodox fundamentalist. In the introduction of his book *Tradition and Alienation* he stated that his apparent anti-westernism did not imply real aversion to the West, whatever the meaning of West was. He was not against meeting and co-operating with the West, provided the prerequisites, the targets and the expectations of such a meeting were clearly set out and qualified. He was in favour of such a meeting, provided that the Greeks were able to choose and were fully aware of their own cultural and spiritual heritage. His conclusion was that the quality of this meeting would be linked to Greek self-respect and dignity; in other words it was a matter of honour to resist the charms of the West and to approach it from a position of superiority.<sup>72</sup> This elegant reservation was widely disseminated through the sneer of Euro-hunger/ry (*evroligouris*), a pejorative term coined by Kostas Zouraris, a communist neo-Orthodox, encompassing all the negative components of mimicking the West that had once characterised the despised and servile Levantines.

## 8.

During the last thirty years, after the collapse of the bipolar system and the shift of Greek Socialists towards the European Union and the Eurozone, anti-Americanism became less militant. Its political face-value was depreciated, since Russophilia and Balkanophilia became legitimate options for Communists and Conservatives alike, but by no means did it become extinct. It was upgraded to resistance to globalization. This new fear of the so-called ‘roller coaster of globalization’,<sup>73</sup> which is expected to crush individuals, nations and cultures, has incorporated all previous aspects of anti-westernism: fear of modernization and post-modernization at the expanse of Greek Orthodox tradition; as well as fear of dependence, in this case of subjugation to

---

<sup>72</sup> Georgios Metallinos, *Παράδοση και αλλοτρίωση* (Tradition and Alienation) (Athens: Domos, 2001), 20.

<sup>73</sup> Metallinos, *Για την Ευρώπη μας*, 102.

the neo-liberal ‘New World Order.’ The latter threat includes the legacy of all earlier fears of imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and Jewish-Freemasonry, even scepticism for the United Nations.<sup>74</sup>

Fine examples of these fears are the debates which took place in the 1990s and 2000s for the revision of traditional historical approaches concerning the Macedonian Question, resistance during World War II and the Greek Civil War.<sup>75</sup> The assumption was that a new historical approach, put forward by neo-liberal historians, was aimed against national and social history in order to undermine and degrade both nations and social phenomena. To strengthen this assumption, post-modernist approaches were arbitrarily connected to American historiography, because it was in the USA that the cultural approach was developed, in favour of a global point of view rather than a national one.<sup>76</sup> In this trend, post-modernist historical approaches were equated with the intentional deconstruction of Greek national history. No less severe was the attack of the revisionists by Marxist historians who accused them of recycling anti-Communism to undermine the ideological hegemony of the Left and de-politicize the struggle of the Greek people against the Germans, the British and the Americans in the 1940s. The blame was put on the West, one way or another. During the same period Euroscepticism, a notion clearly overlapping with anti-globalization, followed and qualified the model which had been initiated in the 1970s by PASOK. It was not an outright rejection of Europe but a conditional approval: “I want Europe, but not this Europe.” This quest developed into a trend in favour of a new utopia: Europe of the immigrants and the minorities juxtaposed to the dystopian Europe

---

<sup>74</sup>

[http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb68\\_el\\_nat.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb68_el_nat.pdf) 2007, 17.

<sup>75</sup> Vasilis K. Gounaris, *To μακεδονικό ζήτημα από τον 19ο έως τον 21ο αιώνα. Ιστοριογραφικές προσεγγίσεις* (The Macedonian Question from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Historiographical Approach) (Athens: Alexandreia, 2010), 115-31; Polymeris Voglis-Ioannis Nioutsikos, “The Greek Historiography of the 1940s. A Reassessment,” *Südosteuropa* 65 (2017): 2.

<sup>76</sup> Ioanna Laliotou, «Ιστοριογραφία και αντιαμερικανισμός» (Historiography and Anti-Americanism), *To Vima*, 24-11-2008.

of the ultra-right and the neo-liberals. This is the trend currently promoted by the party of SYRIZA (Coalition of the Radical Left).

Through the channel of neo-Orthodoxy discussed above, the official Church of Greece was easily in tune with the Eurosceptics, projecting its own vision of a Christian Europe, the enemy of Islam, closed to Muslim immigrants. Its interest in politics, fully fledged in the days of the late Archbishop Christodoulos, pushed the Church of Greece down the road of national populism, which had been opened wide by PASOK in the 1980s.<sup>77</sup> This is how the late Archbishop expressed his views on Europe:

“The most severe threat is the emergence of an ideology which bypasses reality and, in the name of so-called modernization, seeks to forget that the roots are not the past of a tree but a factor in favour of its survival. I am referring to those who want to cross out the Christian character of Europe and turn the continent into a hollow hostel of ideologies, turn us into beings without tradition and therefore without resistance and without prerequisites.”<sup>78</sup>

This hostel was in his view a ‘false Europe;’ the ‘malignant ideology’ was modernization.<sup>79</sup> Professor Christos Giannaras, another eminent neo-Orthodox, in 2003 accused the European Union of an inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* the nouveau riche primitivism of the USA. The EU, he claimed, was trading off its tradition and achievements to imitate the American prototype.<sup>80</sup> It was in the same year that father Metallinos (and not some communist leader) wrote that the Yugoslav wars had amply shown, even to the most adamant Greek supporters of Europe, that the EU essentially was serving the interests of its most powerful members and required the unconditional surrender of small nations to its will. Next to the Yugoslav wars more diplomatic crises

---

<sup>77</sup> Giannis Stavrakakis, “Religious Populism and Political Culture: The Greek Case,” *South European Society and Politics* 7, no. 3 (2002).

<sup>78</sup> <https://archxristodoulos.gr/index.php/2012-12-07-11-01-14/324-europa-nostra>

<sup>79</sup> <https://archxristodoulos.gr/index.php/2012-12-07-11-01-14/315-2012-12-07-10-40-04>

<sup>80</sup> *Kathimerini*, 14-9-2003.

could be added which were perceived by the Greeks as insulting and humiliating their soul.<sup>81</sup>

During the last decade the on-going economic crisis has deeply embedded the view that Greece is being constantly punished, insulted and humiliated by Europe without mercy. Taking full control of the Greek economy topped the list of insults. In a way, the memoranda imposing specific economic and financial policies symbolized the end of the old dilemma. Greece was compelled to choose and to state her future path; it could no longer balance between the East and the West. It was clear that the Greek nation had been exhausted chasing Europe, had failed to catch up with the EU, and had crashed loudly and embarrassingly, as Professor Giannis Voulgaris pointed out.<sup>82</sup> A failure of that size was unbearable. It could not but increase contempt for Europe, with anti-Germanism as the most convenient spearhead and alibi of this trend. Fused with the fear of globalization, anti-Europeanism quickly evolved into the new Great Idea; not only of SYRIZA, but of at least twenty Greek political parties, from the far Left to the Naziphiles. Twelve years after father Metallinos, SYRIZA Minister Sia Anagnostopoulou, a professor of History, declared: ‘Because I have always been a European, I no longer want this Europe. I do not need to prove that I am a European. They need to prove they are and they should hand their proof to us.’<sup>83</sup>

## 9.

To conclude: When Greece entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century, anti-westernism had been fully shaped as a parameter of Greek political ideology and the USA was already a part of it. Antipathy for the West was a core ingredient of its permanent identity crisis, the outcome of Greece’s unstable and undecided position between East and West, an element of its romantic nationalism, full of contradictions and dilemmas. This

---

<sup>81</sup> Metallinos, *Για την Ευρώπη μας*, 16.

<sup>82</sup> Giannis Voulgaris, *Η μεταπολιτευτική Ελλάδα, 1974-2009* (Greece after the Dictatorship, 1974-2009) (Athens: Polis, 2013), 442-3.

<sup>83</sup> Petros Papasarantopoulos, «Αντιευρωπαιϊσμός, η μεγάλη ιδέα του ΣΥΡΙΖΑ και όχι μόνο» (Anti-Europeanism, the Great Idea of SYRIZA and Others), *The Books Journal*, 23-3-2017, <http://booksjournal.gr/παρεμβάσεις/item/2543-antievrvpaismos-big-idea>

stance was not an exclusively Greek phenomenon. It was nourished by arguments provided by the general criticism of western culture and civilization, coming both from the Right and the Left, as well as by Occidentalism, that is the critique of the West with arguments forged in the West. Anti-westernism, dismissive, competitive or selective in its expression, was a point of convergence and compromise between the traditional religious Orthodox identity and modern Greek nationalism. It was an unsteady point of balance on which Greek utopian idealism was gradually built. In terms of social development, it was a point of resistance against the transformation of the local cultural identity of the Greeks into a civic one, of the western sort.<sup>84</sup> By its nature, anti-westernism was an expression of the lower strata, not of the elites. Therefore it focused on a dual threat or fear, to recall the terms of Rena Stavridou-Patrikiou:<sup>85</sup> (a) the primordial fear that Eastern Orthodoxy and its tradition would be corrupted by western modernization, social and political – the parliamentary system included as an instrument of capitalism; (b) the threat/fear of dependence upon the Great Powers of the West which would destroy the prolonged Greek irredentist vision, as it was incompatible with the Turkophile policy of the West and the Panslavist policy of Russia. The latter threat of dependence (and the necessary foreign policy to achieve independence) was complicated by the former, the fear of corruption, because Russia and the Balkans were Orthodox brethren and appropriate allies in the anti-western struggle, yet despised foes at the same time.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century Greece faced serious challenges both in domestic and foreign affairs: participation in two world wars, the course of irredentism before and after the Asia Minor Catastrophe (from Macedonia to Cyprus and back to Macedonia), relations with Communism and the Soviet Union, as well as Greece's place in the post-World War II bipolar power system, the European Union, and the global market. These challenges caused repeated domestic crises, political and economic. Sometimes they took the form of dilemmas,

<sup>84</sup> D.G. Tsaousis, «Ελληνισμός και Ελληνικότητα» (Hellenism and Greekness), in *Ελληνισμός, ελληνικότητα. Ιδεολογικοί και βιωματικοί άξονες της νεοελληνικής κοινωνίας*, ed. D.G. Tsaousis (Athens: Estia, 1983), 15-25.

<sup>85</sup> Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou, *Oi φόβοι ενός αιώνα* (The Fears of a Century) (Athens: Metaichmio, 2008).

‘with the East or with the West?’; ‘tradition or modernity?’ It was not only in Greece that these questions were presented in this form.<sup>86</sup> Sometimes the choice was indeed between East and West. What makes the Greek case interesting and more sentimentally charged, yet not exceptional, is (a) the constant, systematic correlation of anti-westernism with social and economic problems so that parties and policies could gain the support of the lower and less educated social strata with greater ease; (b) the significant and deliberate correlation of anti-westernism with issues of national identity and religious consciousness, and (c) as a result of (b) the deep impact of anti-westernism on the shaping of the historical paradigm. None of these factors was a 20<sup>th</sup> century novelty. But their impact was deeper because the terms and the ways in which the public debate and political confrontation evolved in Greece from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards changed a lot. Anti-westernism in 20<sup>th</sup> century Greece was neither uniformly expressed by an elite, nor was it an exclusively grass-root movement. Yet, during the prolonged integration crisis of the Greek nation and compared to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it had many more opportunities and ways to be expressed and qualified either by intellectuals or by the common people.<sup>87</sup>

The exploitation of anti-westernism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century involved both constituent threats to Modern Hellenism, alienation and dependence, which are recalled selectively but steadily, always invested with a lot of sentiment and expressed through stereotypes within different political contexts. Materialism, which is the most effective cause of alienation, has been attributed to the Entente allies of World War I and to colonial Britain in particular, but also to German Militarists, to Communism (manufactured in the West), to Capitalists and Imperialists, to the USA, Europe, the EEC and EU and to the western culture in general. The Jews are explicitly connected to all these threats; therefore, anti-Semitism is an organic ingredient of Greek anti-westernism.

---

<sup>86</sup> Mikael af Malmborg-Bo Stråth, “The National Meanings of Europe,” in *The Meaning of Europe. Variety and Contention within and among Nations* (Oxford–New York: Berg, 2002), 1–25.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Nikiforos P. Diamandouras, *Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Post-authoritarian Greece* (Madrid: Instituto Juan March de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales, 1994).

Even Germanophilia during both world wars, although it was a western choice, was projected as a weapon to defend idealism and therefore justify Greek cultural identity and its superiority over Capitalism and Communism alike. Dependence upon the unholy alliances of the Westerners, the second threat, constitutes an insult to Greek honour, a mockery of a brave nation, exploitation of its love for honour (*filotimo*), betrayal of its impeccable principles, framing of its great ideas by endless conspiracies. In many cases Greek anti-western campaigns for independence imply alternative choice of allies, mainly Russia and the Balkans. Be they Orthodox kingdoms, members of a communist federation, socialist states or just profitable export markets in the vicinity, these lands are closely related to Greek dreams of expansion and Orthodox reunion under Greek leadership, spiritual if not political.

In brief, Greek idealism, invested with many pre-modern virtues (resistance, *palikarism*, *filotimo*, humanity, autarchy) and portrayed as a rival to the greedy capitalist West, inspired interwar urban nationalism; the third Hellenic civilization of Ioannis Metaxas; ‘Hellas of Greek Christians’ (the vision of the 1967 dictators); the anti-imperialist struggles of Greek Communists; and the irredentist struggles of the nationally-minded Greeks, the Orthodox and neo-Orthodox intellectuals fighting against dependence, mutation and alienation. In the context of Greek 20<sup>th</sup> century political confrontations, Royalists and Venizelists, Communists and Conservatives, dictators and Socialists all exploited with confidence similar if not identical arguments; they invoked the same fears and easily won the support of the lower strata – and, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not only of the lower strata. Even if all of them do not have the support of the Greek Church, it is clear to the people that they share the Orthodox view of Greekness (i.e., the notion of Hellenic-Christianity), the Orthodox objections to modernity, even popular Christian anti-Semitism. The selective relationship with the Church legitimizes politicians, regardless of their ideology, as exponents and representatives of the people, a notion invested with national purity, thus justifying their fight against the alienated, servile and false Greeks. Historians, public and party historians in particular, back them up by canonizing the fighters and movements that resisted de-

pendence on the West, thus building the proper history for a nation of *palikaria*, not as the West wanted it to be but as it has always been.

I believe that all those who wonder why the leftist culture has so easily prevailed in the post 1974 era should consider the full exploitation of Greek idealism by the Left, expressed as a constant fight against dependence on the West; a stance which charms all Greeks and can recruit allies in any political party. Therefore, this attitude has easily undermined post-war *ethnikofrosyni* and even more easily pro-Europeanism. Anti-westernism is the common denominator of anti-Imperialism, anti-Americanism, Euroscepticism and, in our days, of the generalized fear of globalization. Even defeat in this struggle, be it defeat in the Civil War in 1949 or in the 2015 mid-summer night negotiations between the EU and Premier Tsipras, has an element of heroism which bestows a moral advantage to the loser. This is why Pantazopoulos<sup>88</sup> has named the 2015 summer referendum, for or against EU, as the ‘new national resistance,’ the old one being that against the Nazis.

As a matter of fact, the rival ideology, sympathy for the West, has almost never been documented in depth in any shape, pro-western, pro-European or pro-American. To the extent it was documented, either in the nineteenth or the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was the work of a few individuals, which was not widely disseminated; nor was it ever conceived by the Greeks as an essential convergence with the West in principles. Pro-westernism was always considered the result of bargaining, as an exchange which implied territorial, financial or security gains and promises. In its most popular and comprehensible form, friendship to the West was connected to anti-Communism; but even in this sense, as stated above, Communism, an expression of atheist materialism, was essentially of western (and Jewish) origin. Greek pro-Europeanism, in particular, has been dependent to a great extent on the Hellenic and Christian premises of Europe. It is narcissism under cover. What Greece admires in Europe is its own reflection. It is also a trap. Whenever Europe diverts from its Greek principles, the Greeks

---

<sup>88</sup> Andreas Pantazopoulos, *O αριστερός εθνικολαϊκισμός. Από την αντιπολίτευση στην εξουσία* (National Populism of the Left. From the Opposition to the Government) (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2016), 127-30.

need to disassociate themselves to protect their own values and image. If the continent takes a wrong turn, the Greeks are the par-excellence jury to restore it to the correct course.

Perhaps it is meaningless to evaluate the quality of Greek arguments for and against the West. What is crucial is to comprehend that this dispute is of marginal political importance. In term of ideology, Greece has been and is still flirting openly with the East; yet in terms of politics it has steadily been engaged to the West. It should also be kept in mind that this dispute is being exploited in Greek domestic politics as a matter of principles, as a choice related to values, but in reality, it has always been an expression of national populism or demagogic. It is the mantle to cover up all Greek shortcomings, a Great Idea suitable for every use. There are many uses, many users and usurers who alternate and shift camps. The camps are defined, restructured and acquire special meaning through the expression of anti-westernism or the adjustment of anti-westernism to the circumstances. In the Greek imagination, Europe in particular and West in general, as processes investing meaning rather than as clearly defined and widely acceptable analytical categories, acquire so many shapes and contents as are necessary to determine Greek identity in negative terms. The West is simultaneously whatever we are not, we wouldn't or we would like to be, and we shall never become.